



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## DEEPWATER GROUPER AND TILEFISH COMMERCIAL FISHERIES TO REOPEN IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS NOVEMBER 1, 2008

The commercial fisheries for deepwater grouper and tilefish in the Gulf of Mexico will **reopen, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) November 1, 2008, through November 10, 2008.** NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) has determined the 2008 commercial quotas of 1,020,000 pounds of deepwater grouper and 440,000 pounds of tilefish have not yet been met.

The commercial deepwater grouper and tilefish fisheries closed in May because NOAA Fisheries Service projected landings would reach the quotas by that time. However, an updated report shows that less fish were landed than expected. Based on 2008 daily landings rates and the pounds remaining on each quota, NOAA Fisheries Service has determined these fisheries can reopen for 10 days. November 1 was chosen as the opening day based on feedback from the fishing industry and weather concerns. Many fishers felt that this was the most productive time for the reopening and NOAA Fisheries Service also chose to wait until after the peak of hurricane season to promote safety at sea (National Standard 10).

The operator of a vessel with a valid reef fish permit may not fish for or possess deepwater grouper or tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, November 1, 2008 and must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such deepwater grouper or tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, November 11, 2008. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of deepwater grouper or tilefish that were harvested, landed ashore,

and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, November 11, 2008, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

The fisheries will remain closed until 12:01 a.m., January 1, 2009. During the closure, vessels with commercial quantities of reef fish on board are prohibited from retaining a recreational bag limit. Thus, a vessel may only have a commercial quantity of reef fish or a recreational bag limit of reef fish.

### How can we improve these fishery bulletins?

If you have any suggestions on how we may improve future fishery bulletins, please contact:

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This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.